



State of Arizona
Department of Education

Tom Horne
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

CN# 25-05

MEMORANDUM

To: School Health & Nutrition Program Sponsors

From: Mary Szafranski, Deputy Associate Superintendent
Arizona Department of Education, Health & Nutrition Unit

Holly Mueller, Program Director
Arizona Department of Education, School Health & Nutrition Programs

Date: December 10, 2004

RE: Procurement and Service of Whole Grain Products

All schools participating in the National School Lunch Program must begin purchasing and offering whole grain products as part of their efforts to promote healthy eating and improving nutritional well-being.

Food manufacturers and food processors are now recognizing the importance of whole grains in the diet. Recently, a major cereal manufacturer has made a decision to reformulate its product line using only whole grains. Local Education Authorities are required to inquire about the availability of whole grain products when developing product specifications and making their procurement plans for the 2005-2006 school year and beyond.

Health and nutrition experts have long advocated eating whole grain products. The current Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend daily consumption of foods with whole grains as their primary ingredient as a means to protect against many chronic diseases. Increasing the consumption of fiber rich carbohydrates over those found in highly processed products may also be an important step in fighting our national obesity epidemic.

With this in mind, Congress has endorsed the consumption of foods consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, such as whole grains, by including a new provision in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. The Secretary of Agriculture will issue more specific guidance to increase the consumption of foods and food ingredients that are recommended in the most recent Dietary Guidelines found at: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/> The new Dietary Guidelines are expected to become available in January 2005. Choosing a variety of daily whole grains is one of the recommendations applicable to the school meal programs starting in the 2005 school year.

The Arizona Department of Education asks each school to review their menu in preparation for these new guidelines.

- If you currently offer no whole-grain products, we recommend you begin introducing 100% whole-grain choices into your daily menu.
- If your menu contains more enriched white bread than whole-grain products, we would like to see you substitute more of the 100% whole-grain products in place of the white bread.
- Finally, if your menu reflects all 100% whole-grain products we commend you for your excellent effort in providing the optimal grain choices for your students.

For your reference, a fact sheet on the importance of Fiber is included with this memo. Thank you for your tireless commitment in planning and offering nutritious meals to Arizona's school children.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this memo, please contact your assigned School Health & Nutrition Program Specialist.

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